

colleague had been with him almost hourly in consultation with the Prime Minister, stated publicly in a speech a few days later that he had himself gone to bed that Sunday night with exactly that assumption.

The Prime Minister had in mind a different development of the drama that he himself had staged. What happened at Buckingham Palace on Monday morning, 24th August, can be known only to the actual participators. What is said is that the King—with whom the Prime Minister had been in constant communication but who never went outside his constitutional position, made a strong appeal to him to stand by the nation in this financial crisis, and to seek the support of leading members of the Conservative and Liberal Parties in forming in conjunction with such members of his own Party as would come, a united National Government. The King is believed to have made a correspondingly strong appeal to the Liberal and Conservative leaders. What is known is that Mr MacDonal came at noon to the final Labour meeting, and at once informed his astonished colleagues that, whilst they were all out of office owing to his resignation, he had actually 'kissed hands' as Prime Minister of a National Government, which would confine itself to what was required to meet the actual financial crisis and would then promptly proceed to a General Election, at which the leaders of the three political parties, without anything in the nature of a coalition or a 'coupon,'⁵ would several!) appeal to their respective followers."

The "Labour meeting" of which he here speaks is the meeting of the Cabinet, to that of the Labour party, the Prime Minister did not come. He had, by then, obtained the adherence to the National Government of three of his late Labour colleagues—of whom Lord Passfield, needless to say, was not one, the party, with practical unanimity, rejected his action and went into Opposition,

above all on
the cuts in Unemployment, declaring that
these sacrifices
were unjust, economically harmful, and wholly
ineffective
to meet the situation In so far as that
situation centred in
the drain of gold from the Bank, it went on, at an
accelerating
rate, after the formation of the National
Government Formed
to protect gold, the National Government
took Great
Britain off the gold standard before it had
been more than